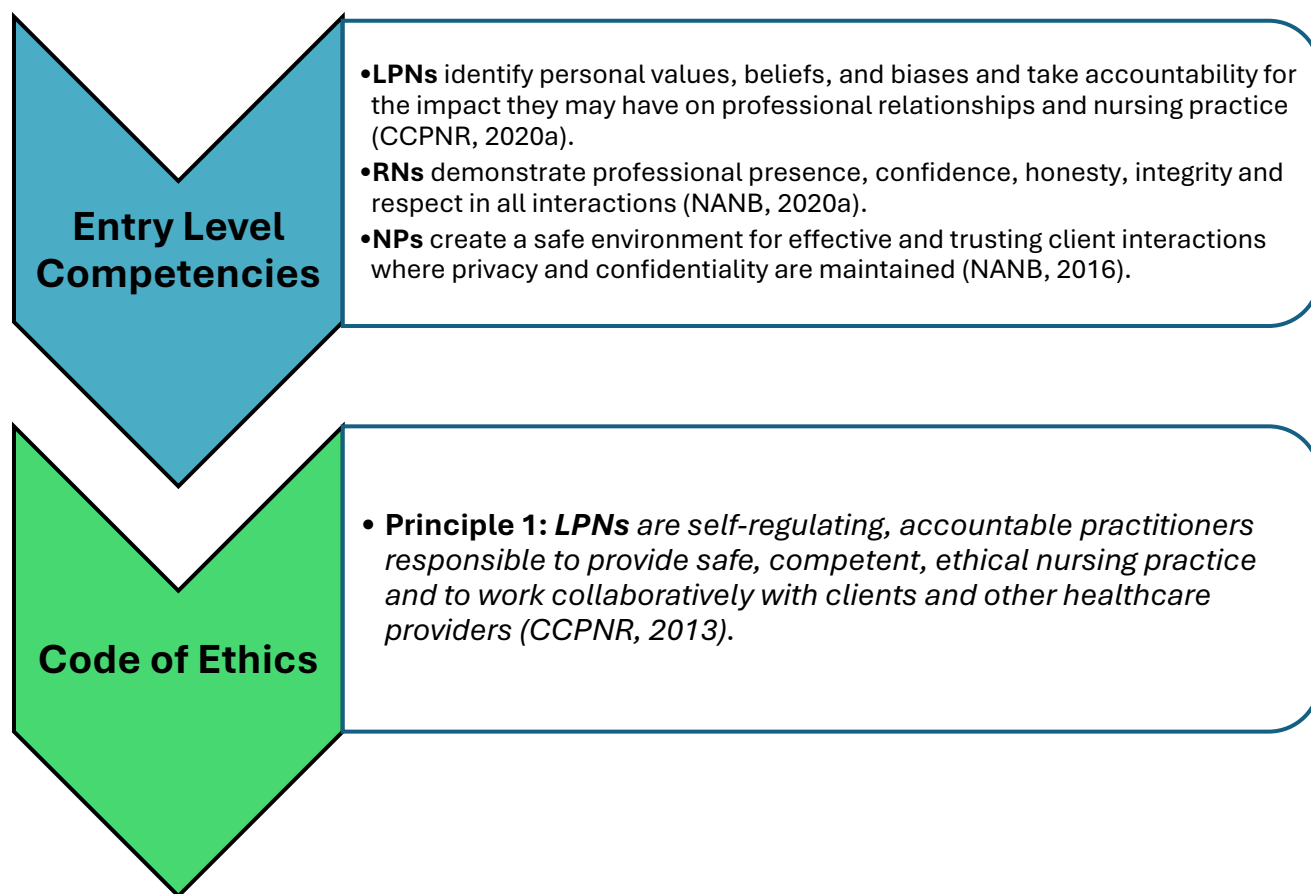


Fact Sheet: Professional Presence

Presence is an element of professionalism and a core relational skill within nursing. It is described as a sincere and reciprocal exchange between the nurse and client – the sharing of a human experience (Fahlberg & Roush, 2016). Professional presence is the demonstration of respect, integrity, compassion, and empathy in accordance with professional standards and regulatory guidelines.

Licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered nurses (RN) and nurse practitioners (NP), also referred to as nursing professionals are prepared with the knowledge and skills to practise safely, competently, compassionately, and ethically. Professional presence includes the awareness of the professional image that is portrayed through collaborative relationships with nursing colleagues, other members of the health care team, the regulatory body, and other stakeholders. Nursing professionals also have practice expectations regarding professionalism that facilitate the concept of professional presence. These professional expectations are described in the diagram below:



Code of Conduct

- 1.1 **RNs/NPs** treat clients with respect, empathy, and compassion;
- 1.2 **RNs and NPs** respect the client's right to dignity, and refrain from expressing judgment, applying labels, contributing to stigma, or engaging in any behavior— intentional or unintentional— that may be humiliating to the client;
- 1.3 **RNs/NPs** provide client-centered care and act in clients' best interests, prioritizing clients' values, beliefs, health and well-being in the nurse-client relationship;
- 2.3 **RNs/NPs** provide care that is respectful of and responsive to differences, cultural identities and personal values, and free from assumptions, stereotypes, and discrimination;
- 2.4 **RNs/NPs** approach each client with openness, recognizing and respecting diversity and individual choices and values;
- 4.3 **RNs/NPs** treat all health care team members with civility, respect, and professionalism, fostering a safe and supportive environment free from any form of mistreatment.

Standards of Practice

- Standard 4.1: The **LPN** identifies personal values, beliefs, and biases and take accountability for the impact they may have on professional relationships and nursing practice (CCPNR, 2020b).
- Standard 4.6: The **LPN** demonstrates practice that upholds the integrity of the profession (CCPNR, 2020b).
- Standard 1: The **NP** is responsible and accountable for their own practice and professional conduct (NANB, 2018).

Characteristics of Professional Presence

Words and actions are central in establishing a caring, therapeutic relationship with clients. Demonstrating professional presence is an important component of the nurse-client relationship. Nursing professionals are expected to demonstrate a professional presence with clients to develop a trusting therapeutic relationship (Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN), 2018). The following characteristics are associated with professional presence (Bambi et al., 2017; Cusack, Drioli-Phillips, Brown & Hunter, 2019; NSCN, 2018):

- accountability;
- integrity through ethical care;
- respectful collaboration;
- communication with confidence and compassion;

- therapeutic touch when appropriate;
- limiting distractions;
- listen to understand;
- being reflective in practice;
- displaying optimism;
- showing compassion and empathy;
- professional appearance.

Professional presence is integral in the development of the nurse-client relationship and in building relationships with the public and health care colleagues. Nursing professionals are expected to reflect on and develop competence in professional practice. For more information on the nurse-client relationship visit NANB's [Standards for the Nurse-Client Relationship](#).

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